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10 June 1959

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

**SUBJECT: The Character and Prospects of the Somoza
Regime in Nicaragua**

1. The Somoza regime has controlled Nicaragua for twenty-five years through its firm control of the armed forces and the established political processes. Opposition to the regime has hitherto been weak, divided, and manageable. Now the regime is threatened by a variety of revolutionary movements among Nicaraguan exiles and by a greatly emboldened internal opposition. The danger to the regime is primarily psychological: it is less a function of the actual capabilities of any particular opposition group than of a rapidly spreading conviction that the Somozas' time has run out. Whatever the outcome of any particular revolutionary attempt, it has become unlikely that President Luis Somoza will be able to remain in office to the expiration of his term in 1963. If moderate opposition elements prove incapable of bringing about an early change in government, anti-US and pro-Communist elements will probably gain increasing influence in the revolutionary movement and in the eventual successor regime.

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